

Appl. No. 09/641,407
Amdt. dated August 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 7, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of both the amendments presented above and the following discussion, the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application is obvious under the provisions of 35 USC § 103. Thus, the Applicants believe that the pending claim is now in allowable form.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, the Examiner should telephone Ms. Alberta A. Vitale, Esq., Reg. No. 41,520, at (203) 469-8097 so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Status of pending claims

Claims 2, 7 and 22 are currently amended.
Claims 1, 4-6, 10-21 and 24-28 have been canceled.

Claim amendments

Claims 7 and 22 have been amended in response to the comments of the Office action stating that 7, 8, 9 22 and 23 are objected to "but would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims" (Office action, page 8). Claims 8 and 9 depend from

Appl. No. 09/641,407
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allowable amended claim 7. Claim 23 depends from allowable amended claim 22.

Claim 2 has been amended to depend from claim 7 and by virtue of the amendment to claim 2, claim 3 indirectly depends from claim 7. In as much as claims 2 and 3 depend from "allowable" claim 7, Applicants respectfully request that the amendment to claim 2 be entered and claims 2 and 3 be allowed.

In view of the amendments presented above the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application is obvious under the provisions of 35 USC § 103(a). Thus, the Applicants believe that all of these claims are now in allowable form.

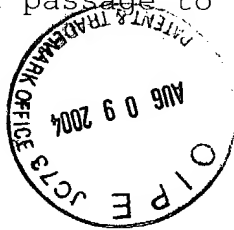
Conclusion

Thus, the Applicants submit that the claims, presently in the application, are not obvious under the provisions of 35 USC § 103.

Consequently, the Applicants believe that all these claims are presently in condition for allowance.

Appl. No. 09/641,407
Amdt. dated August 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 7, 2004

Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.



Respectfully submitted,

August 6, 2004

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited on **August 6, 2004** with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, with sufficient postage, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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Reg. No.